



For more information, contact:
Staci Griesbach, 916-492-5349, or
Kathy Helm, 509-536-1252
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**YAKIMA WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADOPTION SEEKS HOMES FOR
WILD HORSES, BURROS – *AMERICA'S LIVING LEGENDS***

**Bureau of Land Management Hosts Wild Horse and Burro Adoption
with Backcountry Horsemen Rendezvous May 17-19 in Yakima**

Yakima, Wash. (April 25, 2002) –Wild horses and burros representing the spirit of the American West will be available to qualified adopters at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wild Horse and Burro Adoption in Yakima at the Central Washington State Fairgrounds May 17, 18 and 19.

These unique animals and their historic herds embody characteristics of endurance and agility. For more than 30 years, through the BLM Wild Horse and Burro adoption program, horses have found their way not only into the hearts of thousands of recreational riders, but into show arenas featuring both Western and English specialties. Burros, noted as great for packing, are also exceptional guard and companion animals.

Wild Horse and Burro Specialist Rick McComas says that once these wild animals are gentled, they can provide a wonderful experience to a variety of horse enthusiasts. "The animals are noted for their sure-footedness and strong sense of loyalty to their caretaker," McComas says.

During the past 30 years, BLM has placed more than 180,000 horses nationally. Adopting wild horses identified as excess to herd areas helps BLM maintain adequate forage and water essential to maintaining good range conditions. This is especially critical during periods of drought, wild fires, and other natural disasters.

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The Wild Horse and Burro Adoption in Yakima will feature 75 wild horses and 25 burros. Interested adopters can view the animals in advance on Friday, May 17 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. and again on Saturday morning starting at 8:00 a.m. Gentling demonstrations by horse trainer Steve Rother and horse behavior seminars with Mary Ann Simonds will educate and entertain horse enthusiasts throughout the day. The oral competitive bid for the burros will begin at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday and viewing of the horses will continue until 5:00 p.m. On Sunday, May 19, doors will open at 8:00 a.m. with bidding for the horses slated to begin at 9:30 a.m. Adoption activities will continue on a walk-up basis until 5:00 p.m.

To qualify, bidders must be at least 18 years of age and have no record of animal abuse. In addition, adopters must have specific facilities meeting BLM criteria and can adopt up to four animals, depending on their facilities. The title to each animal will remain with the federal government for one year. To get an adoption application or more information, visit the BLM website at www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov or call toll-free **1-866-4 MUSTANGS**.

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for managing the nation's public lands. The wild horses and burros on the public rangelands are managed consistent with BLM's multiple land-use mission that takes into consideration natural resources such as wildlife and vegetation and other users such as livestock and recreation. With the passage of the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971, a responsibility of BLM is to preserve and protect wild horses and burros and to manage for healthy rangelands. When an over-population of wild horses and burros exists on the range, the excess animals are removed and offered to the general public for adoption.

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